

Epitritus wheeleri, n. sp., an Ant new to Science; with Notes on the Genus Epitritus, Emery.

By H. DONISTHORPE, F.Z.S., F.E.S.

♂ *Pale reddish-yellow, head, thorax, and petiole rugose, post-petiole and gaster shining. Clavate hairs very sparse, except on the gaster; round white squamiform hairs all over head and thorax.*

Head cordiform, longer in proportion to its breadth than in *E. emmae*, but shorter than in *E. clypeatus*; *cheeks* with one distinct long clavate hair; *clypeus* triangular, reaching between the antennæ as far back as their insertion, longer than in *E. emmae*, but a little shorter than in *E. clypeatus*; *mandibles* long, somewhat hollow on their innerside, furnished with a pointed tooth in the centre of its upper edge, and two longer teeth at the apex, one proceeding from the upper and the other from the lower edge; *antennæ*: *scape* broadest near middle, internal border rounded and arched, but not angled in the centre (as is the case in *E. clypeatus* and less so in *E. emmae*), with three round white squamiform hairs placed along the edge, between the base and the centre; *funiculus* with the last joint very long, second joint broader and longer than the first, but hardly broader than the last, first joint longer than broad.

Thorax: *prothorax* with one distinct long clavate hair placed at each humeral angle; *epinotal spines* sharp, somewhat obscured from above by two hairs, one clavate, the other squamiform. *Petiole* elongate anteriorly, nodiform posteriorly and higher than the post petiole; *post petiole* considerably broader than the petiole, with a thin layer of whitish spongiform membrane at the junction with the gaster, and a thicker layer at the sides and beneath; *gaster* long oval, longitudinally striate at the base. *Long*, 1.6mm.

Described from a single worker taken by Dr. R. C. L. Perkins, at Honolulu (Oahu), Hawaiian Islands, who dug it up at the root of a tree in company with *Monomorium* and *Cardiocondyla*. I have named this ant in honour of my friend Professor Wheeler. Very few species of the genus *Epitritus* are known, they are all small yellow hypogæic ants of obscure habits, and little is known about them except that they are found under deeply embedded stones, and at roots of trees, etc. They probably often accompany other ants, on whose brood they prey, and are all extremely rare, no doubt on account of their subterranean existence. They have only four-jointed antennæ, the lowest number possessed by any ant.

The genus *Epitritus* (Haliday *in litt.*), was described by Emery [*Bull. Soc. Ent. Ital.*, 1, 136 (1869)], for the reception of a single species *E. argiolus* (Haliday *in litt.*), which was first taken in Italy by A. H. Haliday.

The following are the species known previously, from the descriptions of all of which *E. wheeleri* differs considerably:—

1. *Epitritus argiolus*, Emery.—*Bull. Soc. Ent. Ital.*, 1, 136-7 (1869). Occurs under deeply embedded stones; Italy, France, Corsica.

2. *Epitritus emmae*, Emery.—*Bull. Soc. Ent. Ital.*, 22, 70 (1890). West Indies: Havana, St. Vincent, St. Thomas.

3. *Epitritus eurycerus*, Emery.—*Termes Fuzetek*, 20, 581 (1897). New Guinea.

4. *Epitritus clypeatus*, Szabó.—*Arch. Zool.*, 1 (1909). Singapore, New Guinea.

E. clypeatus, Szabó, var. *malesiana*, Forel.—*Zool. Jahrb. Syst.*, 36,

JUNE 15TH, 1916.